(4) THE REVIVAL OF HEBREW IN PALESTINE

In Palestine as elsewhere Hebrew entirely disappeared as a means of daily intercourse two thousand years ago. Only after 1882, when the Palestine ideal arose, did young Russian Jewish immigrants endeavour to re-establish Hebrew in Palestine as the common language in place of European tongues. Much was done in this direction by Elieser ben Yehuda of Jerusalem, who died in 1922; he worked fanatically for the discarding of foreign languages and the return to Hebrew. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Khoveve Zion founded the first schools in Palestine in which instruction was given in Hebrew. Since then Hebrew has been adopted in almost all Jewish schools, more especially since 1913, when the Zionist Organization took charge of education. In this way the Jewish youth of Palestine, formerly divided into more than a dozen groups each with a different language (Yiddish, Arabic, Spaniole, German, French, English, Persian, Georgian, etc.), has once more received a common language which acts as bond of union between them. At the census of 1922, Hebrew was declared by 80,396 Jews (95-9 per cent of the total) as their common language, and by 165,488 (94-8 per cent) in 1931.

The Palestine Constitution recognizes Hebrew beside English and Arabic as an official language of the country. Jews may use it in their relations with the authorities and may demand that official communications be likewise made in it. Similarly Hebrew has been introduced for official inscriptions on public buildings, coins, postage stamps, side by side with English and Arabic.

Outside Palestine Hebrew is hardly used for common intercourse. In Western and Central Europe many Jews have no longer any knowledge of Hebrew, while with others it is confined to the reading and superficial understanding of Hebrew prayers. In Eastern Europe the majority of